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Palouse Falls State Park - 2020 Guide to Washington's State Waterfall!

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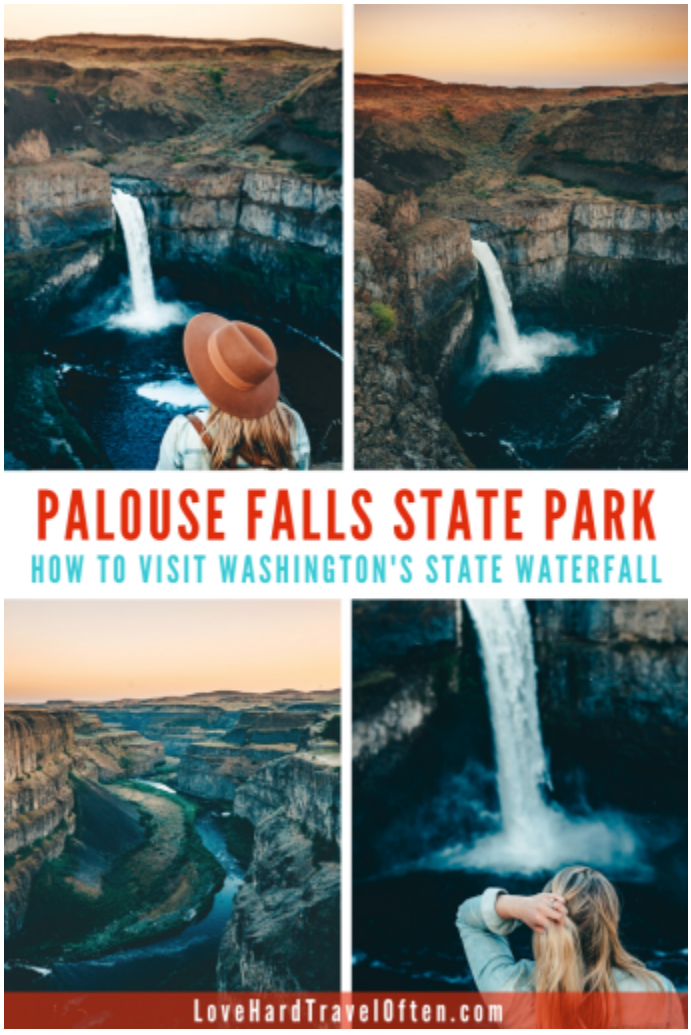


Palouse Falls State Park is home to Palouse Falls, the **official state waterfall of Washington**! The falls were formed by glacial flooding

during the last **Ice Age** and are some of the last remnants of this time.

Honestly, the **beauty of Palouse Falls and the surrounding basalt cliffs really blew us away!** On the drive there through the flatlands of Washington we didn't really expect to see this magnificent work of nature when we turned the corner. But then there it was, roaring with power and beauty. You definitely need to see it for yourself!

These falls are a **must-visit in Eastern Washington**. Read below about how to visit them, what to do during your visit and everything you need to know before you go!

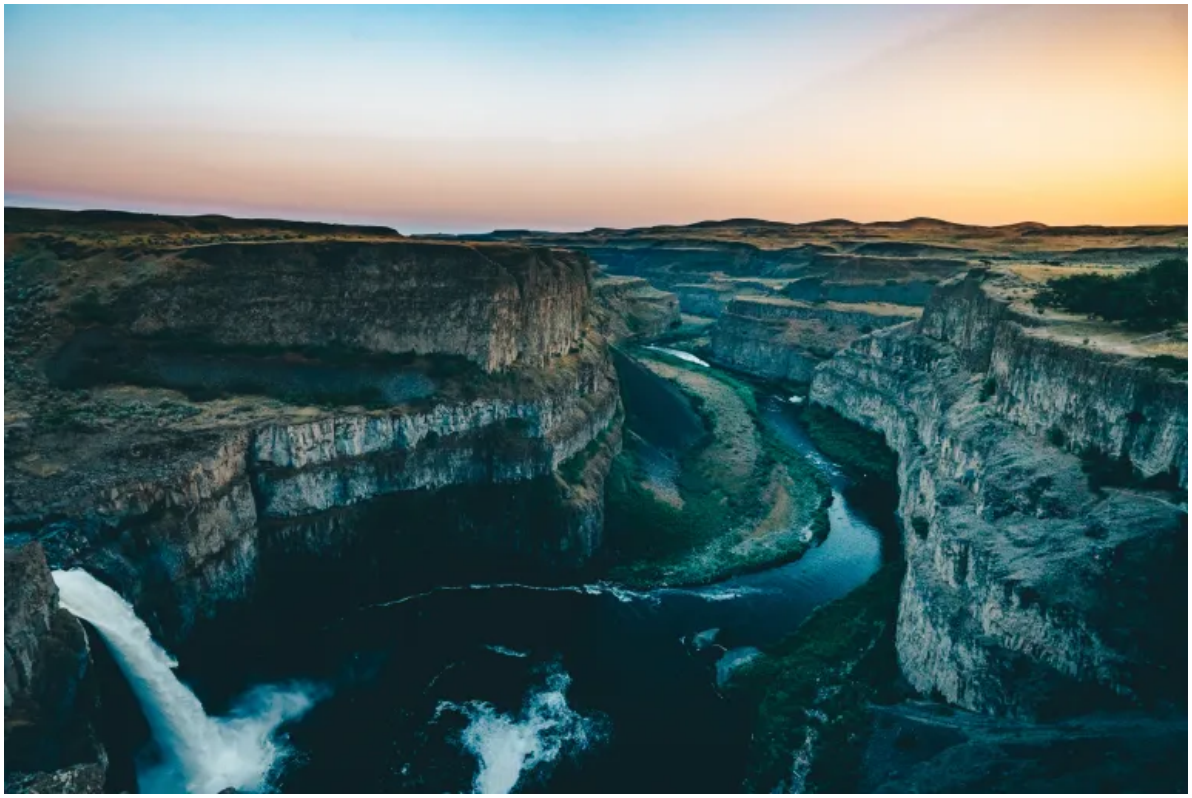
Palouse Falls State Park is in the **Southeastern corner of Washington State** in the town of **LaCrosse**, Washington. It's a little less than 2 hours from Spokane.

Overview of Palouse Falls State Park

Location	46.663888, -118.227207
Waterfall height	200 feet (61 m)
Pass Required	Discover Pass
Entrance Fee	$10 day pass, $30 annual pass

Park Hours	6:30 am to dusk
Best time to visit	April to June/July
Bathroom/facilities	Yes
Dogs allowed	Yes, leashed
Camping allowed	Yes and no. Currently closed for 2020

History of Palouse Falls State Park



Palouse Falls and the surrounding canyons were **formed by powerful glacial floods** during the last Ice Age. These floods not only created the falls and basalt cliffs, but also **changed the course of the river**.

Then, in 2013, a group **3rd to 6th graders** from the nearby town, Washtucna, proposed that the waterfall should be our state waterfall. So they worked with their teachers and local representatives to **draft a bill**. In **March of 2014** these young students' **dreams came true** as Governor Jay Inslee signed House Bill 2119 naming Palouse Falls as the **official state waterfall of Washington**.

Things to do in Palouse Falls State Park

Palouse Falls State Park isn't swarming with a long list of things to do, but it's still worth a visit! The **primary thing to do**, of course, is **view and photograph the falls**. Directly from the parking lot you'll see the path where you can view the falls. There is a nice **ADA accessible trail** along the canyon that offers different perspectives of the falls as well as panels detailing the history.

To the left of this path, there is an **unofficial area** where you can go and get a **great view of the canyon**. While there are signs here saying to be careful and all rescue costs will be at your own risk, the area is still accessible and safe if you take proper precautions. While unofficial, this area is not forbidden and blocked off like the trails down to the falls are.

Besides viewing the falls, the park has tons of **picnic tables** where you can enjoy a meal of snack (not during COVID though). During normal years (aka not COVID years) you can **camp** here, as well!

Can you hike to the bottom of Palouse Falls?

Technically yes, but it isn't encouraged. There is allegedly a path that takes you around the perimeter of the canyon and down to the falls (we didn't find it) but there are many warnings attached. The trail down is apparently very precarious and a few people died here a couple years back. In fact, there were many gates up around what appears to be a former trail.

That said, people are still finding ways to hike down and that's their prerogative. Like I said, since we didn't find the trail we can't speak from experience there. Personally, **we stuck to the provided path and still had an amazing view of the falls.** Whichever you choose, just make sure you follow the **Leave No Trace principles** and be VERY careful!

Can you camp at Palouse Falls?

Yes and no. In a normal year, yes. However, during the **2020** COVID times the **campground is closed** until further notice.

Generally, though, the park has a relatively small **tent-only campground** and it's first-come first-served. You can check here for more info on camping at Palouse or call (509) 646-9218.

Can you swim at Palouse Falls?

It is **not advised nor permitted to swim here** at Palouse Falls, even if you are able to access it through a side trail. The waterfall is extremely powerful and has led to some drownings. Instead, consider going down the road to another state park, **Lyon Ferry State Park**. Here the water is super accessible and it's a great place for swimming, boating, water sports, fishing, etc!

How tall is Palouse Falls?

Palouse Falls is a staggering **200 feet (61 m)** tall! It is not only super tall, but it's also crazy powerful.

Is Palouse Falls State Park open?

Yes, as of **July 2020** Palouse Falls State Park was **open** but with specific COVID requirements.

COVID requirements and precautions at Palouse Falls

As of June 26th, **masks are required** in Washington in all indoor public spaces and all outdoor spaces where you can't keep 6 feet of distance. In addition to this requirement, Palouse Falls has made quite a few changes during these COVID times.

Namely, during the 2020 season:

- **Camping and/or overnight parking is not allowed**
- **No potable water is available**
- **Nighttime photography is not allowed**
- **The picnic shelters are closed**

I'd also recommend **facing away** from people when passing, **not swapping phones/cameras** to take photos for strangers and packing **hand sanitizer** to be extra careful during these times.

For the latest requirements you can always check here.

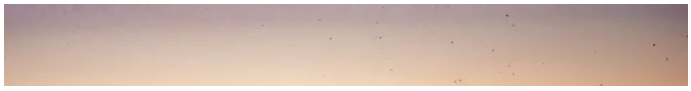
Palouse Falls State Park entrance fee and required pass

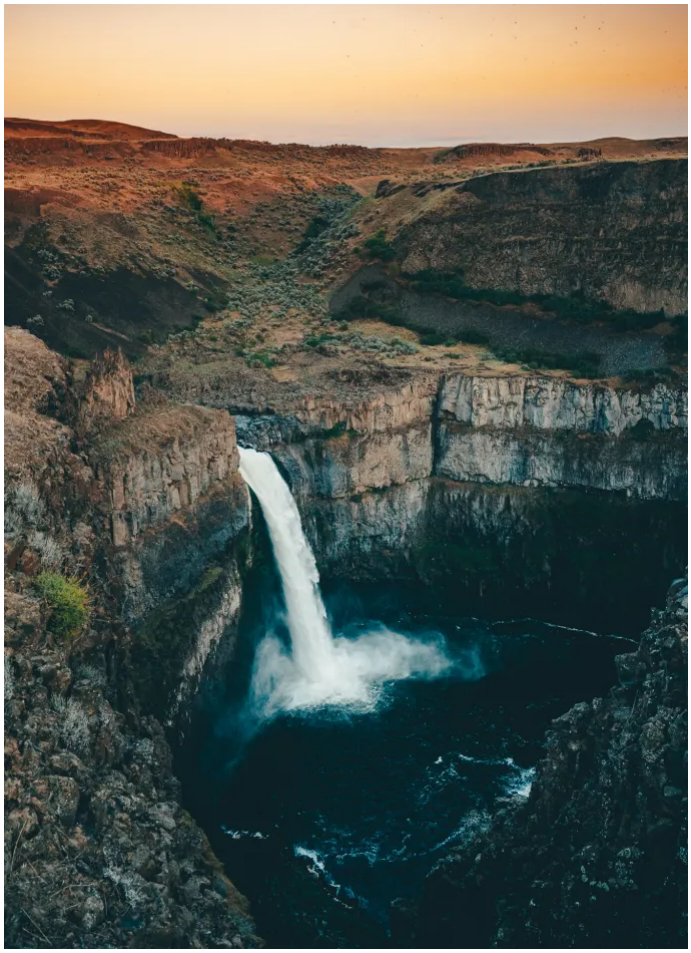
A **Discover Pass** is required to visit Palouse Falls State Park and **must be displayed** in your car. It costs **$10 for a day pass** or **$30 for an annual pass**. In the parking lot there is a **machine** where you can purchase a day or annual pass via **credit/debit card**. If you want to use **cash or check**, you can use one of the provided **brown envelopes**. It is a $99 fine if you don't have a pass.

Palouse Falls State Park Hours

The park hours are **6:30 am until dusk**, daily.

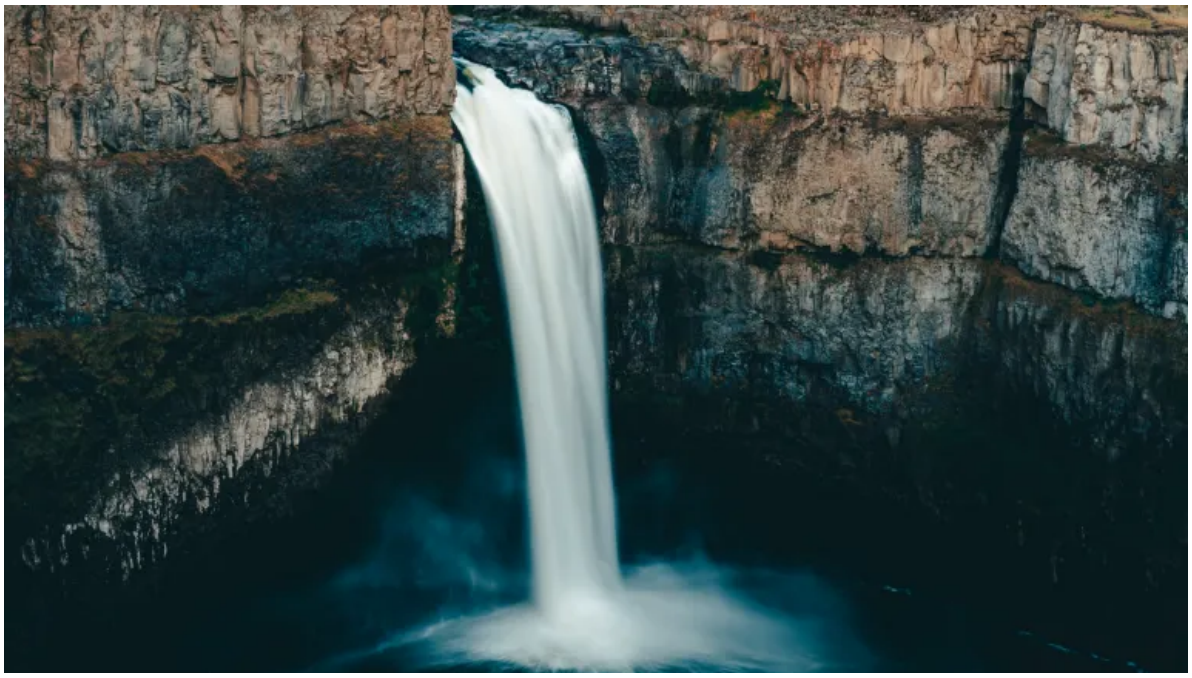
Best time to visit Palouse Falls State Park





April through early July are the best times to visit the falls. This is when the falls are at their heaviest flow and it's not too hot yet. If you go later in the summer, avoid the mid-day heat since it's a dry desert here.

Is Palouse Falls State Park safe to visit?



Yes, if you follow the posted rules, act smart and don't push your limits the falls are perfectly safe to visit. Unfortunately, though, there have been quite a few deaths here. So it is of upmost importance to be vigilant and smart during your visit.

Are dogs allowed at Palouse Falls State Park?

Yes, **dogs on a leash are allowed** and welcomed at Palouse Falls. Please be careful with them near the edges!

Palouse Falls State Park Facilities

At the park there are **bathrooms**, **picnic tables** and **campgrounds**. For the 2020 summer the picnic tables and campgrounds are closed, though.

How to get to Palouse Falls State Park

Palouse Falls State Park is pretty much in the middle of nowhere, but the **drive isn't too bad**. The park is accessed by taking **highway WA-261** to **Palouse Falls Road** and continuing until you run into the parking lot. Make sure you have enough **gas** since the nearest fuel is 15 miles away in Starbuck, WA.

Spokane to Palouse Falls

It's a little **less than 2 hours** to get from Spokane to Palouse Falls. Just take the I-90 W to the WA-261 to Palouse Falls Road and you're there. Enjoy the back-country roads and don't forget to make a **pit stop at** #thatNWbus along the way!

Seattle to Palouse Falls

The drive to **Palouse Falls State Park from Seattle** is quite the **trek** at **nearly 4 hours.** But again, the drive is pretty straight forward. Take the I-90E to WA-261 to Palouse Falls Road and you're there. Because it's pretty far, I recommend stopping at #thatNWbus along the way and making a multi-day trip out of it by visiting **Spokane**, the **tri-cities** or **Coeur d'Alene** while you're out east.

Pullman to Palouse Falls

If you're coming from **Pullman**, expect a **90 minute drive**. Take US-195 N to WA-26 W to WA-261 S and then follow Palouse Falls Road until you reach the parking lot. Don't miss this colorful bus at the intersection of 26 and 261!

Kennewick to Palouse Falls

Palouse Falls State Park is actually **less than 90 minutes from Kennewick**. Take US-395 N to WA-260 E to WA-261 S and follow Palouse Falls Road to the parking lot.

Parking at Palouse Falls

There is a parking lot right by the falls and the bathrooms. It's pretty large but apparently in peak season it can fill up. We had absolutely no problem finding a spot on a weekday night, though.

What to bring with you

- **Athletic shoes**
- **Water –** don't forget to pack ample water for you and your pup.
- **Sunscreen** – since the area has very little shade and the sun is very strong, it's important to remember sunscreen.
- **Camera –** you certainly don't want to forget your camera! This is the camera gear we bring!
- **Bug spray**
- **Snacks** – there are tons of picnic tables here to have a beautiful snack or lunch!

- **Mask** – masks are currently required in Washington state
- **Hand sanitizer** – this is always nice to have, but it's especially necessary during the pandemic.
- **Money for entrance fee** (credit and debit card accepted)

Photography tips for Palouse Falls

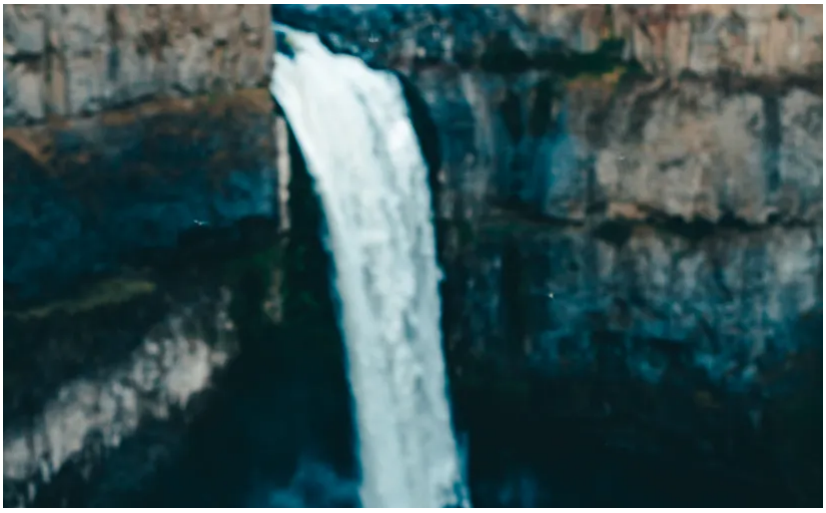
- **Bring both a zoom lens and a wide angle lens.** We were SO happy we brought both of our lenses. **Check out the** photography **gear we use!**
- **Don't risk your life for a shot!** Stay in marked areas and don't get too close to the edge. If you hate the fence in your shot, just edit it out with the Touch Retouch app. Check out all of our favorite mobile editing apps here!
- If you want to up your photography game before you go, check out our online photography course! Currently 60% off!

Psst.. Did you know? All of the photos in this article are edited with our Lightroom Presets **that we use to edit our photos!** Check them out!

Are drones allowed at Palouse Falls?

Unfortunately you **cannot fly drones** in Washington State Parks without a drone permit. More info on the rules and how to apply for a permit are here.

Tips before you go



- **Download Google Maps** for the area before you go since service is limited.
- There are **restrooms** at the parking lot
- Make sure you have **ample gas** in your car!
- Watch out for **Rattlesnakes**
- **Prepare for the heat** – this area can be extremely warm so make sure you have plenty of water and dress accordingly.
- There is a **fire ban** every summer
- **Be smart** – obey the signs, don't do anything stupid. These drop offs are no joke and no photo or hike is worth your life.
- The **nearest hospital** is 40 miles away in **Dayton, WA 1-509-386-2531.**
- **Emergency numbers** to know:
- **Park Ranger**: 1-509-646-9218
- **WA State Patrol**: 1-509-734-7034

Things to do near Palouse Falls State Park

While Palouse Falls is kind of in the middle of no where, there are a few places to combo with Palouse during your trip!

- #thatNWbus – this evolving piece of art is along most routes to Palouse and is a must-see!
- **Lyons Ferry State Park** – this state park is nearby and is a great place

to swim, boat, fish, etc.

- **Spokane** – Spokane is the biggest town near Palouse Falls and is under 2 hours away. You can also visit Coeur d'Alene, Idaho while you're there!
- **Walla Walla** – since it's only an hour away, this beautiful wine country is a great place to combo with Palouse Falls.

Other PNW inspo

- Cannon Beach Oregon!
- 9 must-do hikes in Washington State!
- Kelly Butte Fire Lookout – the best hike in Washington

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Enjoy your trip to Palouse!

Kylie & Scott